

To: Enck, Judith[Enck.Judith@epa.gov]
Cc: Spalding, Curt[Spalding.Curt@epa.gov]; Szaro, Deb[Szaro.Deb@epa.gov]
From: Garvin, Shawn
Sent: Wed 6/8/2016 3:23:57 PM
Subject: Re: Hoosick falls

Thx

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 8, 2016, at 11:10 AM, Enck, Judith <Enck.Judith@epa.gov> wrote:

From: Region2 PAD News <Region2_PAD_News@epa.gov>
Date: June 8, 2016 at 10:08:24 AM EDT
To: "R2 EPA Region 2 (EPA Staff)" <R2_EPA_Region_2_EPA_Staff@epa.gov>
Subject: News Clips (PFCs)

<image001.gif>

POLITICO: Blood tests cause panic in Hoosick Falls, lawmakers plan no action

By Scott Waldman

06/08/16 05:26 AM EDT

HOOSICK FALLS — Rob Allen rushed home from his teaching job on Tuesday to find his wife at home weeping and curled in a fetal position.

She has been upset since four separate envelopes arrived from the state Department of Health the other day. Each was addressed to one of her children, and the letters said the children have dangerous levels of a toxic chemical in their bloodstream. Their youngest daughter, who is still breastfeeding, had the highest level of the toxin, known as PFOA, coming in at 112 parts per billion. The median number for 2,000 town residents who were tested was 23 parts per billion.

Story Continued Below

For almost the baby's entire life, state and village officials had assured the family that their water was safe, Allen said. The children's numbers are higher than their parents', and Allen's wife is concerned that PFOA passed through her and into the bodies of her children.

"My daughter was five months old when the village and state knew [about the contamination], and my daughter is 18 months old when the village and state finally said don't drink your water," he said.

In the last few days, people throughout Hoosick Falls have received blood test results back that show far higher results of toxic chemicals in their bloodstream than what the state claims is the mean for the area, which is itself 11 times higher than the national number. People in Hoosick Falls say they are receiving blood tests of that are more than 50 or 100 times the national number.

The median number, 23 parts per billion, may be skewed by the inclusion of town residents with private wells who did not drink the town's tainted water. Ominously, Allen said, among the dozens of people with whom he has spoken in town, young children seem to be displaying far higher numbers than their parents.

Allen said he feels betrayed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration and by elected officials who waited more than a year to warn village residents away from drinking their water, which was tainted with PFOA by nearby facilities that made teflon products.

Other young families, where mothers are breastfeeding their children, have been crushed by the news, particularly those with children who were young enough that they could have avoided the water altogether if state and local officials had alerted the public.

"There is this whole contingent who are devastated, utterly devastated, that that utterly perfect time of nursing a child has been corrupted," he said. "Now, they're wondering if they've done the right thing. There is so much guilt out there that is [affecting] mothers."

The issue of PFOA, or perfluorooctanoic acid, in water has become particularly urgent since the federal EPA determined last month that drinking water containing more than 70 parts per trillion of PFOA and PFOS, a related chemical, is harmful to human health. The municipal water supply in Hoosick Falls tested at more than 600 parts per trillion, and the Cuomo administration actively pushed back on EPA warnings that it was dangerous, leaving locals exposed for months. The chemicals are used in industrial manufacturing of non-stick goods, including food packaging, furniture, cookware and firefighting foam.

The dire news emerging from Hoosick Falls in the last few days confirms what many had feared. Hundreds of people, from babies to the elderly, have a dangerous level of toxic chemical in their blood stream. PFOA has a half-life of about three years and there is no known way to expel it from the body earlier. The chemical has been linked to cancer, thyroid problems and high cholesterol, among other issues.

A 45-minute drive away, in the crowded halls of the state Capitol, where lawmakers are looking to wrap up this year's legislative session, those concerns may as well be happening on another planet.

State lawmakers are poised to leave Albany in a few days without attempting to address one of the state's most significant environmental crises in years, one in which there is now substantiated proof that hundreds of people have a dangerous toxic chemical in their system. Planned legislative hearings on water quality issues, which would have prominently featured Hoosick Falls, have been canceled.

On Tuesday, U.S. Rep. Kathleen Rice of Long Island, a Cuomo ally and former co-chair of the Moreland Commission, became the highest-ranking Democrat to call for legislative leaders to hold hearings on how the state and federal government handled the Hoosick

Falls crisis.

"I urge leaders in Albany to convene hearings so that we can examine how officials at all levels of government have responded to contaminated drinking water in upstate communities and what must be done to restore access to clean water for residents in those communities," she said in a statement. "We also need to know the full extent of PFOA contamination across the state — how prevalent these chemicals are in our public water supplies, what other communities may be at risk, and what we can do to eliminate that risk before people suffer the consequences."

In Hoosick Falls, the blood tests results raise significant questions about what other towns like Hoosick Falls have yet to be discovered in New York, and what the state's plan is to identify them and mitigate the pollution.

Hoosick Falls certainly is not the only community now facing PFOA contamination in New York. The town of Petersburg nearby also had dangerous levels of PFOA in its municipal water supply. Last month, Newburgh city manager Michael Ciaravino declared a state of emergency and shut down the city's primary water supply. Ciaravino made the decision, which was in defiance of Mayor Judy Kennedy, because the water has tested positive for a high level of PFOS, or perfluorooctanesulfonic acid, which is similar to PFOA. The city water supply, which recorded a level almost three times the new federal safety limit of 70 parts per trillion, first tested positive in 2014. As with Hoosick Falls, elected officials did not significant action there until Ciarvino took a stand.

The Newburgh pollution may have come from a firefighting foam used at the nearby Stewart International Airport, though an exact cause has yet to be determined. The federal government is conducting tests at military installations across New York, but it's not clear how long that will take. In the meantime, the state has not released a plan for testing them or checking nearby water supplies that may be missed by the military.

Cuomo has repeatedly characterized his administration's handling of the Hoosick Falls crisis as aggressive. He recently dismissed POLITICO New York's reporting of his administration's pushback against federal regulators who raised concerns about Hoosick Falls as a "political he-said, she-said."

That news about the blood tests arrived just before close of business on a Friday, when governments tend to release bad news, and is the closest the Cuomo administration has come to acknowledging a misstep in its handling of Hoosick Falls. Just a few weeks before, the administration used the same time slot to put out a statement on the pending federal investigation of Cuomo's upstate economic development plan.

The administration's handling of the crisis in Hoosick Falls may raise significant medical questions, experts say. The administration has not released the full range of results, simply telling reporters that the results range from "non-detect" to 200 parts per billion, which is far below some of the high numbers residents are saying they received. By refusing to publicly release the full scope of test results, without names attached, the administration has also made it hard to draw conclusions from those results, experts say.

The state should show residents the geographic distribution of test results, to target areas where exposures may be higher and so they can determine where their own results fit, said

Richard Klapp, a professor of epidemiology at the Boston University School of Public Health. For medical professionals, it's important to have the full range of results.

"The most important thing is to give the range of results they found and then give the national pattern," Klapp said. "If there are other communities where there is public contamination, how does Hoosick Falls compare to that."

For instance, looking only at the full range of numbers, which includes hundreds of residents on private wells who were not exposed to PFOA, will make the median much lower. The totals for the village, where residents have much higher results, are certainly far higher. The state's unwillingness to release the full scope of the material makes such important calculations impossible.

On Monday and Tuesday, in the state Capitol, there was little desire to talk about the Hoosick Falls water crisis, or what steps could be put in place to protect other communities around the state from a similar situation.

Senate GOP Majority Leader John Flanagan walked away from a reporter on Monday rather than answer a question as to why he had not called for legislative hearings into water quality issues around the state. On Tuesday, Basil Seggos, acting commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation, left his bag behind because he skipped out of a committee hearing so quickly before a reporter could ask him questions.

A bipartisan group of lawmakers holding a press conference on a new bill that would expand testing for lead in school water supplies bristled when asked whether Hoosick Falls situation required that the legislation be broadened to include other contaminants. They ended the press conference shortly after reporters started asking about Hoosick Falls.

When the session ends June 16, most lawmakers will rush home to begin their re-election campaigns.

Bottles of drinking water are seen in a hallway at St. Mary's Academy in Hoosick Falls. | AP Photo/Mike Groll

Emotions run high as health officials try to answer PFOA concerns

WNYT Staff

06/07/2016 12:28 PM

HOOSICK FALLS - People in Hoosick Falls are getting their first chance to talk to state health staffers about their PFOA blood results.

Their blood levels were sent out in the mail last week, with little information about what that number means to their health.

The Armory was open from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday to give people answers. However, because state health knows so little about the effects PFOA. There is a lot of emotion in

this village.

Maryann Jacobs came out of her meeting with state health angry and crying. She'd hoped to learn more about what her PFOA blood level meant to her health. But she says she didn't learn much.

"Right now I'm a wreck. Because I came here thinking that anything is better than nothing and I'm telling them more than they know," she complained.

Jacobs's 148 parts per billion blood level is about 70 times higher than the average American's.

Studies have linked PFOA exposure to cancer. However, State health maintains that having even a relatively high amount of PFOA in your blood, can't tell you if you have or will have health problems.

"Although scientific studies can tell us a lot about how an exposure may be associated with a particular health outcome. It's very hard to translate that for an individual patient," explained Dr. Nathan Graber, the director for the Center for Environmental Health.

Graber recommends seeing your doctor if you're concerned about your PFOA levels. However, he doesn't say treatment will be any different because of PFOA in your blood.

NewsChannel 13's Asa Stackel asked Graber why we do these blood tests if we don't know if you're at risk for one of these diseases.

"There are a number of reasons we did it. I think the primary reason is because people wanted to know about their exposures," noted Graber.

The average Hoosick Falls PFOA blood test came back 11 times higher than the average American.

Older residents tend to have higher levels. However, Jacobs' 9 and 10-year-old children have levels about 25 times higher than average. She says it doesn't make sense.

"I haven't lived here all my life. My numbers are high. My fiancé's levels are high. You know it's been nine years and we have the levels of someone that work in the factory," she noted.

The only remedy is time. PFOA levels split in half every three years.

Remember those hearings the state Assembly agreed to hold on Hoosick Falls? They haven't happened yet. Now, there's a group going around town with a petition demanding they happen.

Times Union

Hoosick Falls grapples with PFOA in blood test results

First checks may be mailed next week for Hoosick Falls, town of Hoosick residents who received contaminated water

By Kenneth C. Crowe II

Updated 11:54 pm, Tuesday, June 7, 2016

Hoosick Falls

State Health Department workers met with residents Tuesday to discuss the PFOA blood test results that have left many in the village worried and upset about their exposure to the suspected carcinogenic chemical.

The preliminary test results show PFOA levels range from non-detectable to more than 200 micrograms per liter among the 2,081 people tested by the state Health Department between February and April in Hoosick Falls, according to the state. Residents were told the geometric mean for those tested was 23.5 mpl, which is the equivalent of 23.5 parts per billion. The national average of PFOA — shorthand for perfluorooctanoic acid — for most people is 2.03.

Scott Garippa said he was surprised by his test result of 84.4.

"I used filters. I thought I was pretty safe," said Garippa, 57, about the extra precautions he took for using the village water.

Garippa said he lives one-quarter mile from the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics plant. He added that many of his neighbors, particularly the elderly, didn't bother to get tested.

The PFOA contamination has been traced to the Saint-Gobain and Honeywell International factories in the village. PFOA was used to manufacture non-stick materials like Teflon and for other uses.

Dr. Nathan Graber, the director for the state Health Department's Center for Environmental Health, said he understands residents' worries and their wanting more information.

The results were from the preliminary analysis of the tests, Graber said. These results include a breakdown by gender and age range. Generally, the longer one has lived in the village the higher the test result number.

Future review will break down the PFOA blood test results to see impacts on subgroups such as people who drank water from the village system; those who relied on private wells; and those who were exposed to PFOA in the local factories. Graber said the state has not set a timeline for completing its studies and continues to accept blood for testing.

With a result of 147, Gwen, 83-years-old, who declined to give her last name, said she won't drink the village water. But, she said, since the new filter system was put in place on the municipal water system, her skin no longer burns and itches after a shower.

Meanwhile, a discussion is mounting in the village streets and on the social media site Facebook about the meaning of the test results released so far — and what additional information is needed.

Residents are also wondering why so many results exceed the 23.5 mark.

"It was over a year before we knew about this," Garippa said. "What would the difference have been in the results."

The state signed a consent order with Saint-Gobain and Honeywell Friday. This has resulted in the payment to the village of \$178,478 by the state Department of Environmental Conservation to pay for water bill rebates.

Mayor David Borge said the checks would cover water bills from October through March.

The amount of each check will vary based on an individual customer's water use.

"We hope to be starting by the end of the week," Borge said about processing the payments.

"Through our ongoing efforts through the state Superfund program, the state will seek to recover the costs of this rebate from the responsible parties," DEC spokesman Sean Mahar said.

Photo: Lori Van Buren

Mike McGuire of Hoosick Falls loads spring water, bought at Tops grocery store, into the back of his pickup truck on Friday, Feb. 12, 2016 in Hoosick Falls, N.Y. McGuire has been a resident of Hoosick Falls for ... more

Questions remain about PFOA blood tests in Hoosick Falls

By Rachel Yonkunas

June 7, 2016, 10:51 pm

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – State representatives gave information explaining the data surrounding PFOA blood test results, but many in Hoosick Falls argue it doesn't give much insight into the exposure within the community.

The Hoosick Falls Armory has been a meeting ground for people to learn more about the ongoing PFOA crisis. But despite receiving blood test results, many residents still have questions.

"I mean, this letter basically says, 'So sad, too bad; go see your doctor,'" Rob Allen said.

Allen and Brian Bushner, both Hoosick Falls School District employees, told NEWS10 ABC

they expected more from Gov. Andrew Cuomo after receiving their PFOA blood test results.

Allen's now-2-year-old daughter was born in May 2014. In October of that year, village leaders told the state the water was contaminated. But for 14 months, the New York State Department of Health told people it was safe to drink.

Allen's blood level is 50 parts per billion. His daughter's was much higher.

"Her number was more than double mine," he said. "Why does my daughter have to suffer simply by them not saying anything, by being ignorant of information, ignorant of the need to get it out there."

The NYS DOH was at the Armory on Tuesday breaking down blood test results and addressing community concerns.

"We'll be doing much more analysis to look at other subgroups," Dir. of Environmental Health at NYS DOH Dr. Nathan Graber said. "We've also been providing this information to people's physicians so that they can go to their physicians and talk about their results."

The community called the information from the NYS DOH "sterile," and students are once again calling for action.

"We're underestimated as a small town, and I think that's a really bad mistake," Hoosick Falls High School student Will Clifford said.

Clifford isn't going to let the governor get off easy. He said he hasn't forgotten what the state has promised to get done.

"Everyone is kind of terrified, and what isn't really being shown is how angry we are," he said.

He's angry that a consent order between companies responsible for PFOA contamination quietly came down on a Friday evening – the same day people learned their blood test results were in the mail.

Questions also remain unanswered.

"What does that number mean?" Allen wondered. "Has it gone down? Has it gone up? I have no idea."

"And when it goes down, where does it go?" Bushner asked. "Your liver, your kidneys? Do your organs retain it?"

Another question: Where is Cuomo?

"He needs to come here and just listen to what people have to say," Bushner said. "Maybe he doesn't want people yelling at him, but you know what? You're a leader."

But there hasn't been any word from Cuomo since his Sunday morning appearance in March. Clifford wants to know where is the progress the state has made in searching for an alternate water source.

"We want to see a new water supply or at least feasibility studies to see if it's possible to get a new water supply," he said. "We want to see that money going towards a permanent solution; not just a bandaged filter fix."

The NYS DOH will continue to have information available at the Armory on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Blood samples are still being collected.

The health department said it is undergoing health outcome review studies to gather more information.

Officials are also holding several public informational meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday to discuss and answer questions regarding the PFOA crisis.

The meetings are expected to cover what needs to be done to meet the new EPA PFOA health advisory level of 70 parts per trillion; PFOA blood test results and what they mean; and legal options for affected families.

According to the Department of Health, recent blood test results show the average PFOA level of those sampled in Hoosick Falls is 23.5 parts per billion, which is more than five times higher than the national average.

The meetings at the Hoosick Falls Armory are part of the Department of Health's regularly scheduled weekly informational sessions. The 7 p.m. meeting is a joint town and village meeting to discuss expanding village water and sewer lines.

- June 7, 2016
- 6:30 p.m.
- Petersburg Veterans Memorial Community Center (PVMCC)
- 71 Main St., Petersburg, NY 12138
- June 7, 2016
- 2 p.m.
- Hoosick Falls Armory
- 80 Church St, Hoosick Falls, NY 12090
- June 7, 2016
- 7 p.m.

- Hoosick Falls Armory
- 80 Church St, Hoosick Falls, NY 12090
- June 8, 2016
- 6:30 p.m.
- Hoosick Falls Country Club
- 73 Richmond Avenue, Hoosick Falls, NY 12090

WRGB

Hoosick Falls woman starting petition for PFOA public hearings

By Kari Beal Tuesday, June 7th 2016

This week residents in Hoosick Falls are starting to find out how much PFOA is in their blood and so far some results are quite alarming. One result was 130 times higher what the CDC says is the average U.S. population PFOA blood level.

Kathy Lingener is a 20 year resident of Hoosick Falls who says cancer runs in her family. She said these results; along with how the situation was handled is why she is asking people to sign a petition to have public hearings on the PFOA contamination.

"I am afraid it will happen to another little town, another small rural community in New York State where nobody is going to hear about it like us," Lingener said.

The hearings were scheduled to happen earlier this year in the New York Assembly, but were canceled. No answer was released as to why. Lingener is now petitioning the Senate to hold the hearings. So far she has gathered over half of the signatures she needs.

"It will set a precedence and maybe it will show the state actions that they should have taken so that they have a plan if this happens again instead of the plan that they had, which everyday it doesn't seem like a very good one," Lingener said.

Lingener said her 20-year-old daughter grew up in Hoosick Falls and although she hasn't received the PFOA blood test results back yet, she is worried about the future.

"It's very concerning to me because you don't think about it, but you are giving your child Kool-Aid or iced tea or mac and cheese with tap water and it's scary," Lingener said. "She is young; she has her whole life ahead of her."

The petition demands answers to many questions like why it wasn't until a year and a half after PFOA contamination was found in the water that residents in Hoosick Falls were notified.

"The length of time that they knew this was here without doing anything or telling us, that is wrong. I live here, I am a human being and I know between Petersburg and here there are 5,000 other human beings that would like to know," Lingener said.

Lingener said she is pushing to get the needed signatures in the next two weeks before the Senate goes on vacation.

The state DOH is will be at the Armory in Hoosick Falls Tuesday and Thursday 2p.m.-8p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.-2p.m. to answer questions about PFOA blood test results.

For more information on the petition click [here](#).

WRGB

Health officials in Hoosick Falls to answer questions

By Kimberly Howard Tuesday, June 7th 2016

HOOSICK FALLS - "I didn't expect it to be so high so it's kind of scary"

Amy Mace was one of the first people to have her blood tested for PFOA back in February.

Tuesday, she was one of the first to discuss her result with officials from the Department of Health.

It came back at 166 micrograms per liter, about 80 times higher than what the CDC lists as the national average.

Mace has lived in Hoosick Falls with her boyfriend for years, but his level is only in the 60's.

State health official Dr. Nathan Graber offers one possible explanation for the difference.

"If someone, a person in the household drinks a lot more water than someone else, their exposure would be higher and their level could be much higher as well," said Graber.

DOH is not releasing the highest level recorded but they do say several people tested above 200 micrograms per liter.

Richard Schumacher is one of them.

"I thought it was high. It was 233 and they say the average in Hoosick Falls is 23 and I have yet to talk to anybody who has had 23 or less," he said.

"This group of people who were analyzed are people that lived in the village and drank the water but it's also people who used to live here and have lived here for a long time as well as people who lived outside the village and private wells that don't have PFOA and it also

includes workers," said Graber.

In the meantime, health officials are urging people to discuss their results with their individual physicians.

"They'll be able to tell me more, hopefully be able to get it all figured out," said Mace.

Petersburgh residents meet with lawyers in ongoing PFOA crisis

By Carmen Chau

June 7, 2016, 10:57 pm

PETERSBURGH, N.Y. (NEWS10) – A closed meeting was held in Petersburg between residents and lawyers to discuss possible legal action once they receive their blood test results.

The meeting was held at the Veterans Memorial Community Center. Many people arrived with documents in their hands. But the one thing they all have in common is they haven't received their PFOA blood test results.

The meeting was planned for three purposes:

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency set the PFOA health advisory level at 70 parts per trillion and what needs to be done in order to ensure the drinking water is safe;
- What it will mean to someone's long-term health if their results indicate high PFOA levels in their blood;
- What legal actions people can take.

The attorneys said they came to Petersburg to listen and to help.

"They had a tough time getting the bottled water process started here," attorney Roopal Luhana said. "They also have a tough time right now in terms of Petersburg. You have an elderly population who can't have access to blood tests, so they have to drive all the way to Hoosick Falls to get their blood tested. Why isn't that being set up here?"

Community members were told to reach out to the attorneys once their results come in.

Many people did not want to speak to the media because lawyers informed them not to speak due to confidentiality. One man, however, told NEWS10 ABC that he felt his concerns weren't addressed, and rather, he called it a sales pitch for the lawyers.

"I was confronted by an attorney, and I say confronted because it was like, 'Well, you have to sign in there,'" Robert Gorghan said. "So I was like, 'I want to find out what's going on in here and they said, 'Well, you can't stay then.'"

People in Hoosick Falls began receiving their blood tests results over the weekend.

According to the New York State Department of Health, the average PFOA level of those sampled in Hoosick Falls is 23.5 parts per billion, which is more than five times higher than the national average.

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